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General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 13 September 2006, 4 p.m.
New York

President Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Report of the General Committee (A/61/250)

The President: May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the General Committee. In that section, the Committee took note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

May I request the General Assembly to now direct its attention to section II, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, rationalization of work, the opening and closing dates for the session, the schedule of meetings, the general debate, the conduct of meetings, et cetera. All of those recommendations concern established practice. Therefore, rather than going through them one by one, I believe it would be better and much more efficient to address all of those organizational matters concerning the General Assembly as a whole. Are there any comments on this approach?

As there are no comments, we shall proceed accordingly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that is requested to be taken note of and to approve all the recommendations that the General Committee has made in section II of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: I call on the representative of Georgia on a point of order.

Mr. Chitaia (Georgia): Is it the President's suggestion that the General Assembly adopt every recommendation made yesterday by the General Committee? If that is the case, then I have an objection, especially as regards item 42 of the provisional agenda.

The President: We will come to that item in due course.

Having just adopted the recommendation contained in paragraph 15, on waiving the requirements of rule 67 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to declare a meeting open, I should like to endorse the practical suggestion that has been made at previous sessions, namely, that each delegation designate someone to be present in the meeting rooms at the scheduled time.

Next, I should like to direct the Assembly's attention to section III of the report, entitled "Observations on the organization of the work of the General Assembly".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in that section, concerning the timely submission of draft

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proposals for the review of their programme budget implications?

It was so decided.

The President: May I now invite members to turn their attention to section IV of the report, dealing with the adoption of the agenda. The question of the allocation of items will be dealt with subsequently in section V.

In section IV the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 44 to 49. In paragraph 50, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 38 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", be deferred to the sixty-second session and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: With respect to paragraph 51, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 41 of the draft agenda.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): First of all, as this is the first time we take the floor during this session, the delegation of Solomon Islands would like to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

Solomon Islands would like to register its concern and disappointment regarding the manner in which the General Committee adopted its working methods in terms of deciding on the items to be included in the agenda for this session, in particular items 41 and 155. My delegation feels that we are continuing to abuse the concept of United Nations reform. By invoking time pressures, we justify denying the rights of States to participate in the debates that shape the agenda.

We need to walk the talk of ownership of this institution. My delegation feels that the principles and values of the United Nations have been violated. As the President is aware, one of the primary roles of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. Articles in the Charter allow Member States to bring to the attention of the General Assembly any situation that threatens international peace. Our being denied a chance to speak also goes against the principles of democracy and universality. Let us not use the Charter principles when they suit us and cover them up when they do not.

My delegation hopes that the time will come when all Members, big and small, are given equal respect. Reforms, we hope, will lead to a true and honest engagement of the presidency with all Members. Solomon Islands had a similar experience last year. The reason for our being denied the floor in the General Committee was said to lie in considerations regarding the Summit Outcome document. We were assured that it would not set a precedent. This year, in the spirit of United Nations reform, we were again denied a chance to speak. The point my delegation is trying to make is that we need to have an open, transparent and inclusive process in which the Member States shape the outcome of our discussions, rather than being dictated to by paper rules. Ownership of the Assembly rests with Member States. We can only strengthen multilateralism by working together collectively.

As a small island State, Solomon Islands would like its comments reflected in the record of this meeting. We hope history and time will look favourably upon our case.

Finally, the delegation of Solomon Islands looks forward to working with you, Madam President. We assure you of our steadfast cooperation.

Mr. Beck (Palau): I extend my congratulations to you, Madam President.

I wish to associate our delegation with the remarks made by the representative of the Solomon Islands.

I was prepared yesterday to deliver Palau's statement to the General Committee in support of the draft resolution we co-sponsored, entitled "A proactive role for the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in East Asia". Unfortunately, and despite what we view as the very clear command of rule 43 of the rules of procedure, which ensures that a member of the General Assembly shall be entitled to seek inclusion of any item in the General Assembly's agenda and to discuss it, we were prevented by the Committee from presenting our views. We do not agree with that decision. We want that noted for the record. We note

that such a limitation of debate on such an important issue does not serve the United Nations.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation is firmly opposed to the inclusion of items 41 and 155 in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. We believe that the overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations are similarly opposed to the inclusion of those items. I therefore consider the content of paragraphs 51 and 59 of the report of the General Committee to be correct, and we accordingly support it. I trust that the content of those two paragraphs will also be supported by the overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations, for the decision of the General Committee upholds principles and justice.

Mr. Oubida (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to add its voice to those of previous speakers, in particular the representatives of Solomon Islands and Palau, with regard to the situation we experienced during yesterday morning's meeting of the General Committee. Burkina Faso is of the view that in the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly, our main objectives are to ensure the effectiveness of the Assembly, its complete compliance with the rules governing its functioning and the reaffirmation of the right of each State to bring before the General Assembly any issue that it deems necessary for the Assembly's consideration.

Yesterday we were prepared to defend that position before the General Committee, in particular with regard to agenda item 155 and to agenda item 41, on a proactive role for the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in East Asia. Regrettably, we were frustrated at having been refused our legitimate right to address the General Assembly and other Assembly bodies to express the viewpoint of our country and state our positions on issues we consider of interest to us and to the United Nations. Again, we would like to denounce that situation and call for the transparent, courteous and clear implementation of rule 43 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

We were opposed, in principle, by a majority. But a majority is not a machine; sometimes the majority is mistaken. And on this issue, the majority that spoke was mistaken, because it rejected our right to express ourselves. We are Member States on an equal footing with other countries. We have the right to express ourselves on any subject that we feel is of interest. Therefore, we would like to rise up against such concepts of the majority, which will necessarily lead us astray. We thus insist upon the principle of holding a debate on the issue concerning the role that the United Nations should play in preventing all conflict in East Asia.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): I am taking the floor to support the statement just made by the representative of the People's Republic of China, in favour of upholding the decision taken yesterday by the General Committee not to include the items in question in the agenda of the General Assembly.

We believe that the issue of Taiwan was definitively resolved by resolution 2758 (XXVI), and that the People's Republic of China is the only lawful Government and the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations. To that end, I wish to reiterate my country's strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China and for the one-China policy.

Mr. Muhumuza (Uganda): My delegation wishes to register its support for the decision of the President, which is clearly in line with General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 1971 on the question of China's representation in the United Nations.

Mr. Hussain (Pakistan): Since our delegation is taking the floor for the first time, we take this opportunity, Madam, to warmly congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. We assure you of our fullest cooperation in ensuring successful deliberations at this important session.

We would like to register our full support to the recommendation from the General Committee in paragraph 59 of its report (A/61/250), by which it was decided that the item relating to the 23 million people of Taiwan would not be included in the agenda of the sixty-first session. We believe that that decision is in conformity with earlier resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, in particular resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 1971, which settled the question of the representation of China by affirming the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations. That resolution clearly recognized Taiwan's position as an integral province of the People's Republic of China. The resolution will continue to guide the position of my delegation and of

the overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership on the issue.

It is unfortunate that despite the clear conclusion reached year after year — that Taiwan, being an integral part of China, cannot stake its claim to membership of this world body — certain countries have once again sought to impose this issue on the United Nations membership. Contrary to the assertion that the inclusion of the item will help in the preservation of peace and stability in East Asia, we believe it would encourage secessionist activities in the Taiwan Strait and that it would lead to blatantly undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China and would thus be in contravention of resolution 2758 (XXVI).

Another important aspect of the issue is that nothing new or exceptional has happened concerning the situation pertaining to Taiwan since the sixtieth session that warrants the reopening of the issue. This year in particular, given the loaded agenda that we have to deal with, we have serious time constraints.

The acceptance of this item would be blatant interference in the internal affairs of a Member State. We must not encourage such a precedent. All such attempts to manipulate the procedures have proved futile in the past and have only consumed the precious time of the entire membership of the United Nations.

Based on those considerations and given that the results are well known to the General Assembly year after year, and in the interest of time, our delegation would propose that we should close the debate on this agenda item and not allow a non-issue to divert the focus of this important session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Maqungo (South Africa): Since this is the first time we have taken the floor since your assumption of the presidency, Madam, we wish to congratulate you and to commend you for the very businesslike manner in which you are conducting our work.

Delegations that have spoken before mine — Cyprus, Pakistan and Uganda — have indicated so eloquently their support for the intervention made by the representative of the People's Republic of China with regard to supporting the recommendations of the General Committee made in respect of item 41 and item 155 and appearing in paragraphs 51 and 59 respectively. We join those delegations in supporting those recommendations by the General Committee.

In the interests of brevity, we wish to indicate only that the matter was resolved by the General Assembly through its resolution 2758 (XXVI) and therefore no longer requires our attention.

Mrs. Papadopoulou (Greece): I am taking the floor in support of the statement made by the representative of the People's Republic of China and the position expressed therein in favour of upholding the decision taken yesterday in the General Committee not to include the items in question in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

The validity of resolution 2758 (XXVI), whereby the issue of China's representation in the United Nations was resolved from the political, legal and procedural points of view, should be respected. Greece has always supported the principle of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Wim Mra (Myanmar): Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time at the present session, I should like to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

The United Nations, in admitting the People's Republic of China as a Member, decided by resolution 2758 (XXVI) that the People's Republic of China is the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations, acknowledging that there is only one China. The question of China's representation in the United Nations was settled once and for all by that resolution. The reopening of the issue thus cannot serve any useful purpose.

Moreover, the General Committee yesterday decided not to recommend the inclusion of items 41 and 155 of the draft agenda in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. The delegation of Myanmar opposes the inclusion of those items in the agenda.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, a proposal has been introduced for our consideration to include in the agenda of the General Assembly an item related to Taiwan's admission to the United Nations. The Argentine Republic rejects that request.

In 1971, resolution 2758 (XXVI) resolved once and for all the issue of China's representation in the Organization. Through that document, the General Assembly recognized that the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China are the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations. The Argentine Republic resolutely supported resolution 2758 (XXVI). That support is based not only on the justice of that proposition, but also on respect for the principle of territorial integrity, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation firmly supports the proposal of the General Committee that has been brought to our attention by the President of the General Assembly at this important meeting.

Paragraphs 51 and 59 of the report of the General Committee reflect the political will of the overwhelming majority of the Organization's Members. They are also in line with the political developments that have taken place in the world — particularly since 1971, with the adoption of resolution 2758 (XXVI), which clearly and unequivocally stipulated that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations.

At a time when the General Assembly is concerned with revitalizing and harmonizing its work, it goes without saying that the reopening of this issue seems, very simply, anachronistic. My delegation rejects any request aimed at challenging the relevant decision on the representation of one unique China in the United Nations.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. I can assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in ensuring the success of our work.

The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic listened very closely to the statement made by the representative of the People's Republic of China, and we fully associate ourselves with it. In addition, we support the decision taken yesterday by the General Committee not to recommend the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly of an item on the representation and participation of Taiwan.

My country, Syria, believes that resolution 2758 (XXVI), adopted in 1971, settled the issue of Chinese representation in the United Nations. We shall continue to support that resolution, which we believe remains relevant and is closely related to the issue under consideration. My country also believes that the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate representative of the Chinese people, and we reaffirm the territorial integrity of that country, its people and its Government. In our view, the issue of Taiwan belongs in the category of Chinese domestic affairs, and therefore any attempt to raise it assails the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and the very foundations of international law concerning relations among sovereign States.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I request that speakers be brief, as the list of speakers for this meeting is very long.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation wishes to lend its full support to the position expressed by the People's Republic of China on the issue of Chinese representation in the United Nations. We believe that this issue has been settled once and for all and that the General Assembly, by acting today in support of the General Committee's decision not to recommend the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, has shown its respect for the recommendation of the General Committee, for the rules of procedure, and for the United Nations.

Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea): Following your appeal for brevity, Madam President, my delegation simply wishes to endorse fully the views expressed by the representative of the People's Republic of China. Yesterday, when agenda items 41 and 155 were brought before the General Committee, my delegation was present.

Madam President, after hearing the comments of the members of the Committee, you ruled against inclusion of the items in the draft agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Therefore, without prolonging the discussion on this matter, my delegation wishes to see that the recommendation of the General Committee is adopted.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): The Brazilian Government is of the view that General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) has definitively settled the

issue of China's representation at the United Nations. Therefore, the delegation of Brazil supports the recommendations of the General Committee contained in this report and opposes the inclusion of the proposed items 41 and 155 in the agenda.

Mr. Mohamed (Somalia): Since this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor, let me first congratulate you, Madam President, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. My delegation supports the recommendation by the General Committee and associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of China emphasizing the unity and territorial integrity of China. We fully support and appreciate that statement.

Mr. Muhith (Bangladesh): Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, allow me, Madam President, to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

My delegation fully subscribes to the statement made by the representative of China. In line with my Government's one-China policy, my delegation fully supports the recommendation of the General Committee that the items entitled "A proactive role for the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in East Asia", and "The question of the representation and participation of the 23 million people of Taiwan in the United Nations" should not be included in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Taupo (Tuvalu): Since this is the first time that Tuvalu takes the floor, Madam President, my delegation warmly congratulates you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. We would assure you, Madam President, of our continued cooperation in working with you during your tenure.

The Tuvalu delegation would like to associate itself with the statements made earlier by the Solomon Islands, Palau and Burkina Faso. The ruling to deny the discussion on agenda items 41 and 155 in the General Committee is anything but fair and just. Indeed, the inclusion of agenda item 41 with respect to international peace and security would be in keeping with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly since its very subject matter is associated with recognizing Taiwan as a sovereign State and a part of the United Nations.

Mr. Elbakly (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation subscribes to the statement made by the representative of China and reaffirms General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI). We consider that this resolution contains the definitive response regarding the question of the representation of the Chinese people in the United Nations. Accordingly, Egypt does not agree that the Assembly should be seized of this item or that it should even be discussed in the plenary. The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt avails itself of the opportunity to reaffirm that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate representative of the Chinese people and that Taiwan is an integral part of China, the motherland. The Government and people of Egypt also reaffirm their hope that the Chinese people will soon unite under the flag of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Shwaikh (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Iraq supports the decision taken by the General Committee on 12 September 2006 not to include in the agenda of the General Assembly, at its sixty-first session, item 41, relating to the proactive role of the United Nations in safeguarding security and peace in East Asia, and item 155, relating to the question of the representation and participation of the 23 million people of Taiwan in the United Nations. The delegation of Iraq reaffirms its support for General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI), adopted in 1971, stipulating that the representative of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate representative of the Chinese people to the United Nations.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, I should like first to congratulate you most sincerely, Madam President, as you accede to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session and assure you that my country will fully support your work.

My delegation supports the statement made by the representative of the People's Republic of China. We support the recommendation of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 51 and 59 of A/61/250 which flows from our country's adherence to the principle of respect for the of territorial integrity of Member States.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I would like to join the other speakers in supporting the statement made by the representative of China. We consider that resolution 2758 (XXVI), adopted in 1971,

settled the political and legal aspects of the question of the representation of the Chinese people at the United Nations. We support the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 51 and 59 of document A/61/250.

Mr. Debabeche (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I have taken the floor since you, Madam, have assumed the presidency, let me tell you that I am filled with joy and pride in addressing you today and telling you how pleased my delegation is to see you preside over our work. We would also like to assure you of the support that you will receive from our delegation.

I should also like to stress that the Algerian delegation considers that resolution 2758 (XXVI) was the final decision regarding the sole representation of the Chinese people at the United Nations and consequently supports the Assembly's proposals, contained in paragraphs 51 and 59, that this item should not be included in the agenda of this session.

Mr. Saleh (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I should like to congratulate you warmly, Madam, upon your election as President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. This is the first time in many years that a woman has served in that post. This is indeed a source of pride for all of us. We believe that it reaffirms the importance of Arab women in our culture and their abilities to serve in the highest posts and to reflect the specific characteristics of our Arab culture, which is a source of pride and identity. We appreciate the scope of your responsibilities and are fully convinced that you will discharge them with outstanding success.

We would like to express our support for the Chinese position and for the provisions of resolution 2758 (XXVI), adopted in 1971. We consider that a final decision was reached regarding the representation of the Chinese people at the United Nations in that resolution. We also reaffirm our support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Ali (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since this is the first time that I have taken the floor, let me tell you how delighted my delegation is to see you presiding over the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. We also wish to endorse the statement made by the representative of China. We would like to support the recommendation of the General Committee that this item should not be included in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, as the question was settled once and for all in resolution 2758 (XXVI) of the General Assembly, adopted in 1971. We consider that the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate representative of the Chinese people to the United Nations.

Mr. Mohamed (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly during this session. My delegation would like to express its support for the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China on the issue under consideration. We also agree with the recommendation of the General Committee not to include items 41 and 155 in the agenda of our current session. The issue was settled finally by resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 1971.

Mrs. Ramos Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, I should like to congratulate you on behalf of my delegation upon your election as President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly and wish you success in discharging these important responsibilities. We extend the same congratulations to the other members of the General Committee and wish them success in their work.

My delegation supports the decision adopted yesterday by the General Committee not to include items 41 and 155 in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. The proposal to include an item to discuss the so-called representation of Taiwan in the work of our Organization is not in line with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, particularly the historic resolution 2758 (XXVI), which was a final and just, political and legal and procedural decision relating to the explicit recognition of the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations. Accordingly, the delegation of Cuba opposes the inclusion of those items in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile is convinced that women can and must discharge the highest of possible functions domestically, as well as in the multilateral arena. Accordingly, we were particularly pleased to see you elected as President of the General Assembly and we would like to reiterate

the support that we had conveyed to you in the course of the meeting of the General Committee yesterday. You have asked us to be concise and I shall be. Let me reiterate what the General Committee said yesterday. We support and implement the principle of one China only.

Mr. García Gonzáles (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): This is the first time that I have taken the floor since your election so let me congratulate you, Madam President, and reiterate our delegation's support for your work. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by Solomon Islands, Burkina Faso, Palau and Tuvalu. Yesterday something happened that should not set a precedent at the United Nations in terms of restricting the right of small States to speak. We believe that, if the majority decides not to include a particular item on the agenda, all views should be heard and a decision taken subsequently, rather than on an a priori basis. That did not happen yesterday.

My delegation wishes to emphasize the equality of all States and the respect that should be accorded to the rules of procedure. We as small countries have listened carefully to all positions, many of which we disagree with. However, we will not avail ourselves of prejudicial procedures to try to restrict the right of States to speak. In that respect, we wish to emphasize that we hope that this will not constitute a precedent in our Organization.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, I will comply with your instructions and be brief, which will be easier for me as the delegations of the People's Republic of China, Cyprus, Uganda, Pakistan, South Africa and several others have already very accurately and eloquently explained their views, which my delegation shares fully.

My delegation would like, therefore, to express its support for the Bureau's recommendation with respect to paragraphs 51 and 59, which are currently under consideration.

Mr. Gharibi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation supports the decision of the General Committee regarding item 41 of the draft agenda, which is reflected in paragraph 51 of the Committee's report.

That draft resolution is not only a clear departure from the long-standing practice of this world body but is also inconsistent with resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 1971. That resolution explicitly states that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the only lawful and legitimate representation of China to the United Nations. In deed and in practice, the resolution settled the issue of China's representation in the United Nations once and for all.

The rejected proposal therefore undermines a basic principle of international law in general and the Charter in particular, in this case respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China. Iran, like the majority of Member States, rejects the draft resolution and believes that the credibility and integrity of the Organization should be preserved by respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all Member States. Iran will not hesitate to shoulder its share of responsibility in that respect.

Mr. Aboud (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on behalf of the delegation of the Union of Comoros, for your well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

My delegation supports the "one China" policy. My delegation therefore supports the positions of those delegations that have taken the floor to remind us, rightly, of the need to comply with resolution 2758 (XXVI), adopted in 1971.

Mr. Londoño (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation will abide by your request for brevity. I should like to express my delegation's support for the statement made by the delegation of China. My delegation recognizes one single China and would reaffirm resolution 2758 (XXVI). Accordingly, we support the recommendation made by the General Committee in paragraph 51 and 59.

Mr. Biaboroh-Iboro (Congo) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor at the sixty-first session, I would like, on behalf of the delegation of the Congo, to wish you every success in guiding our work.

Briefly, my delegation is against the inclusion of the issue of the representation of Taiwan on the agenda of this session. It supports the recommendation made by the Bureau as well as the statement made by the delegation of China, in accordance with the consistent

position of my country on this issue, in the light of resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 1971.

Mr. De Silva (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka's policy on China has been consistent. Sri Lanka firmly believes that there is only one China — the People's Republic of China — and does not accept the theory of the existence of two Governments. Sri Lanka accordingly opposes the request for the inclusion of items 41 and 155.

Mr. Antonio (Angola) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time we are taking the floor since your assumption of the presidency, I wish simply to congratulate you warmly, Madam, and to convey our support for the views expressed by the representative of the People's Republic of China and all the delegations that spoke along those same lines.

The President: Let us now turn to paragraph 52 of the report of the General Committee. The General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 42 of the draft agenda.

Mr Kryzhanivskyi (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the GUAM States — namely Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine — with regard to our joint request for the inclusion on the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Protracted conflict ion the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development".

The member States of GUAM were disappointed by yesterday's decision of the General Committee on this issue, which is, as members may know, of extreme importance for our countries. We therefore request that a vote be taken at today's plenary meeting of the General Assembly, with a view to taking an appropriate decision on the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the sixty-first session.

The reasons we proposed having the issue of protracted conflicts in the GUAM region on the agenda of the General Assembly are quite obvious and comply fully with Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations. We also explained them in the memorandum attached as an annex to the letter from the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of the GUAM member States addressed to the Secretary-General (A/51/195). Our joint request was motivated by the dangerous situation in the GUAM area and by the lack of progress in the settlement of protracted conflicts in the region.

Despite international mediation, the protracted conflicts in the territories of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Azerbaijan have lasted over 15 years and have had far-reaching negative implications for international peace and security and for regional stability and development. There is no doubt that unresolved conflicts have a negative impact on the political, social and economic situations in those States and that they affect the lives of millions of people. Unfortunately, we cannot say today that things are changing for the better.

In that regard, the GUAM member States are confident that the consideration at the General Assembly of the issue to which I have referred will have a positive impact upon the peace process.

I would like to stress that the members of GUAM are not trying to change the existing negotiating formats. What we are asking the General Assembly is to give us a chance to draw the wider attention of the international community to life-and-death matters, at least for three countries that are Members of the United Nations.

In conclusion, let me call upon the members of the General Assembly not to deny the four nations of GUAM their right to bring before the Assembly an issue that affects their vital interests. I also urge the Council to vote in favour of including this new item in the agenda of the sixty-first session.

In closing, to be very clear, GUAM States are requesting a vote.

Mr. Alasania (Georgia): I welcome the opportunity to appear here before the sixty-first session of the General Assembly to underline the importance that the States members of the GUAM Group (Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) attach to the inclusion of the agenda item on protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development.

The countries of GUAM want — together — to accelerate the efforts to deal with the challenges our nations face. We share common values: democratic development and the aspiration to be valuable partners and contributors in maintaining international peace and security. The main obstacle we face is protracted

conflicts in the GUAM area. Those so-called frozen conflicts are frozen in the sense of a political settlement but they are not frozen in terms of the situation on the ground. The peoples of our countries are suffering in conflict zones where current peacekeeping operations have not produced any tangible results for more than a decade. Human rights violations, abuses and obstacles to the return of internally displaced persons (IDP) are intolerable.

Nonetheless, we continue to work towards a full-scale political settlement based on universally recognized principles of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the recognition of the rights of all ethnic groups who lived in the conflict zones before violence erupted. We, as well as the international community, have waited too long for separatist regimes to act on a credible IDP and refugee return process. It is now time for the United Nations to consider new options designed to set that process in motion. We therefore want to be able to address those issues in a transparent way with all the members of the General Assembly, including those participating in current mediation of-conflict-resolution processes.

For the hundreds of thousands who are suffering, were forcibly expelled from their homes and have no right of return it will be very hard to comprehend why this universal Organization is reluctant to discuss a very important issue that affects their lives. GUAM States are entering a new phase whose complex dynamics calls for a bold and creative approach on the part of all actors involved in the peace process and presents both new opportunities and new challenges.

After the confusing results of yesterday's General Committee meeting, Georgia, together with the other GUAM States, urged all members to consider supporting us in addressing the challenges of aggressive separatist regimes and to lead the peaceful-conflict-resolution process in a results-oriented direction. We urge all member States to vote in favour of including this item in the agenda.

Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia): Madam President, I believe the Russian Federation requested the floor before my delegation did. I ask that the floor be given to them before my delegation speaks.

The President: I call on the Russian Federation.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation would like to make the following statement in connection with the statements made by previous speakers.

We would like to recall that the issue of including this item in the agenda has already been considered in a meeting of the General Committee. As a result, the initiative taken by the States of the Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova Group (GUAM) did not receive support. The General Committee took a very clear decision: not to recommend the inclusion of the item in question in the agenda of the General Assembly at this session.

As in the past, we continue to believe that this initiative is essentially intended to undermine the existing mechanisms to resolve the Nagorny Karabakh, Georgia-Abkhazia, Georgia-Ossetia, and Transdniester conflicts. As we are all aware, those mechanisms were established following painstaking work by the international community and the parties to the conflict. We are firmly convinced that the mechanisms are effective and that they provide for every possibility to fully resolve the conflicts. There is therefore absolutely no need to involve the General Assembly in a discussion of the conflicts, which are effectively being resolved within the existing settlement mechanisms.

Moreover, the situation is stable in the regions where the conflicts are taking place. It does not represent a threat to international peace and security. The Russian Federation assumes that progress in the settlement of those conflicts will be fostered by the ongoing efforts of the international community and the parties to the conflicts.

With regard to the procedural aspect of this issue, we are of the view that the way the matter is being presented in plenary — by including a new item on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly — has already been rejected by the General Committee. It would be entirely erroneous to do otherwise. Basically, today's move is intended to undermine the authority and procedures of the General Committee.

As we know, in accordance with rule 22 of the rules of procedure, the General Assembly may amend or delete items from the agenda by a majority of the members present and voting. In accordance with rule 23, if the General Committee recommends the inclusion of any item on the agenda, a debate must be

held on that inclusion. The rules of procedure do not provide for the raising and discussion in plenary of a proposal put forward by a State or group of States to include a new item on the agenda if the proposal has already been rejected by the General Committee. That is all the more true when the rejection has been made by consensus, which was in fact what occurred in this case when the General Committee decided by consensus not to recommend the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at this session.

I would reiterate that, in the past, the General Assembly has taken decisions to amend or delete certain agenda items approved by the General Committee. We have found no precedent for the inclusion of agenda items when those items have already been rejected by the General Committee, because such hypothetical decisions would run counter to rules 21, 22 and 23 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure.

We therefore believe that any revision of a consensus decision in violation of the rules of procedure would undermine the existing traditions of the United Nations and the rules of procedure themselves, and would be to the direct detriment of the General Assembly and the States Members of the United Nations.

The President: I call on the representative of Armenia.

I call on the representative of the Republic of Moldova on a point of order.

Mr. Tulbure (Republic of Moldova): I have a question: Who decides who is allowed to speak after whom? There is a rule. We indicated our desire to speak before Russia and Armenia. Armenia ceded its right to speak to Russia, and yet Armenia has again been offered the floor. What is going on? I do not believe that this is in accordance with the rules of procedure.

The President: The Secretariat provides us in writing with the names of those who wish to speak, because we cannot see everybody very clearly from the podium. I urge the representative of Moldova not to consider it as anything against him or anybody else. I have a list, and I go through it.

Mr. Tulbure (Republic of Moldova): How could it happen that Armenia may cede its right to speak to Russia, and after that be offered the floor? Armenia should wait for several other speakers before taking the floor. That is logical.

Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia): I apologize for the misunderstanding. If my colleague from Moldova wishes to speak before Armenia, we would be more than willing to cede him the floor, but we would like to request the floor before any action is taken.

Mr. Tulbure (Republic of Moldova): I thank the representative of Armenia for her cooperation.

Yesterday, at the meeting of the General Committee, at which two of us were prevented from speaking, I said that for several years in a row we have tried to place a single, very simple item on the agenda of the General Assembly — an item, I said, the discussion of which would not require sending troops or spending money on efforts or resources on the part of the Organization. Nothing of that kind would be required. We asked for a discussion to be held on the issue of protracted or frozen conflicts in a number of countries.

In that context, yesterday I asked myself and those present at the meeting why we come to the United Nations. Do we come to face the denial of one of the fundamental rights of any legitimate Member of the United Nations to be listened to and to be heard? What is this whole Organization about? Is it about monologues, inequality, second-rank countries and problems, or procedural manipulation? There are masters of manipulations in procedure here, but they should read the rules carefully and not make their own interpretations.

Dialogue and discussion, the search for ways and means to settle conflicts and to help those who need help — that is what this Organization is about. That is why and what we come to the United Nations for. That is what we come together for.

I called yesterday upon the members of the Committee to endorse the proposal set forth by Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova (GUAM) and to have a discussion on an issue of vital interest to a considerable number of the legitimate Members of this Organization. I called upon them to stick to the fundamental principles of the United Nations. I called for that in the General Assembly today because there were no arguments against said proposal yesterday in the Committee, but the decision was taken.

There is no need to go into the details of all these hitherto frozen conflicts. I repeat that those conflicts are only frozen for now. Why should we wait for these conflicts to turn into hot ones? It is always better to be proactive than to be reactive. That is what we strive for, and it is what the Organization strives for. Indeed, it is what the whole reform of the Organization has been about. Now we are fighting over saving money, resources and human lives. Discussion and dialogue today mean peace tomorrow. Lack of discussion, lack of dialogue and procedural exercises here endanger peace and stability in the GUAM region.

I promise not to go into detail but rather to keep my remarks brief. What is going on in our country is nothing short of decolonization. Yes, the process that has been completed everywhere else in the world is still occurring in GUAM, on territories of the former Soviet Union. There is a lot of work ahead for the General Assembly, and for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in particular.

We represent four nations — more than 60 million people — and call on the Assembly to listen to the plea of those 60 million. We, the last colonies on Earth, ask to be listened to and to be heard.

Mr. Mammadov (Azerbaijan): First of all, Madam, let me warmly congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. I wish you success and would like to assure you that you can count on the support and cooperation of my delegation. After long male dominance in the presidency, it is a real pleasure to see a charming lady presiding on the podium.

The views of my delegation have been reflected in the statement made by our colleague on behalf of the GUAM countries, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova. In my national capacity, I would like to add the following comments.

In their 2006 joint declaration on the issue of conflict settlement, the heads of GUAM States acknowledged the necessity of intensifying conflict settlement efforts and called upon States and international institutions to further facilitate, within their competence, the process of conflict settlement in the GUAM area. Guided by this, the GUAM delegations in the United Nations requested that a new item be included in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, entitled "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development". In doing so, the GUAM delegations are not seeking to change the existing format of negotiations on the settlement, which we support and adhere to. I would like, again, to emphasize specifically that we are not going to change the existing format of negotiations. Neither is it the intention of GUAM to open discussion on political issues pertaining to the resolution of those conflicts. Nor will I touch upon these politically sensitive matters here in this meeting.

GUAM requested the inclusion of the new item as a procedural matter. It is the Charter responsibility and Charter right of each Member State to bring up any matter of concern, and I appeal to General Assembly members not to deny that Charter right to any Member State. I urge Member States to support the GUAM request for inclusion of this item. It is up to the General Assembly to decide on its agenda items, and I hope the Assembly will do so, based on its Charter responsibility.

Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia): First of all, I would like to express our full support for the statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

Yesterday, the General Committee, after thorough consideration of the proposal made by Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova, decided to recommend to the General Assembly not to include the proposed new item in the agenda of the sixty-first session. Today we witness a situation where some Member States are attempting to force their position on the General Assembly, a position which did not enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of the General Committee. This approach not only creates a dangerous precedent in the effective management of General Assembly affairs; it attempts to undermine the credibility of the General Committee by counterposing it to the General Assembly and undermines the rules of procedure.

While discussing the issue yesterday, Armenia raised several points, two of which I would like to emphasize now. Armenia believes that what this initiative attempts to do is to create parallel processes to the already existing ones within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Armenia views this initiative as another demonstration of the continued effort by Azerbaijan to affect the peace negotiations within the Minsk Group of the OSCE.

Moreover, this would add another item to the agenda of the General Assembly, under which Azerbaijan would attempt to bring in issues relating to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, thus effectively taking the peace process out of the OSCE Minsk Group, which is totally unacceptable to Armenia, as it would be detrimental to the negotiation process.

While Armenia recognizes the right of any Member State to propose any item for inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly, it considers this introduction of a new agenda item at a time when the General Assembly is engaged in its revitalization exercise — and given that these issues could easily be discussed under at least three agenda items, among them prevention of armed conflict and the right of peoples to self-determination — a clear abuse of the rules of procedure and totally unacceptable.

In this respect, Armenia is strongly opposed to such action by those Member States and fully supports the recommendations of the General Committee. We call on all States members of the General Assembly not to challenge the decision made yesterday by the General Committee recommending non-inclusion of the item proposed by GUAM.

The President: As there are no additional speakers, I propose to suspend the meeting for five minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 6.30 p.m. and resumed at 6.35 p.m.

The President: Members have heard the statement just made by the representative of Ukraine, proposing that item 42 of the draft agenda, "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development", be included in the agenda of the sixty-first session.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We should like to seek a clarification on the situation.

As members know, today's meeting of the General Assembly has been convened in accordance with rule 21 of the rules of procedure in order to adopt the report of the General Committee. We have just adopted the agenda for this meeting. I should like to draw members' attention to the fact that the agenda of today's meeting does not refer to the inclusion of a new item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, on which we are now called to take a decision.

We should therefore like you to clarify your intentions, Madam, in that context.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Moldova.

Mr. Tulbure (Republic of Moldova): I should like to read out rule 21, to which the representative of the Russian Federation referred: "At each session the provisional agenda" — that is, the document we received in advance — "and the supplementary list," — as I understand it, a supplementary list includes those agenda items that were proposed to supplement the provisional agenda — "together with the report of the General Committee thereon, shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval as soon as possible after the opening of the session".

That is exactly what we have been doing and what we are doing now: trying to approve the provisional agenda so that it is simply an agenda, not a provisional agenda, together with supplementary items put forward by the Members of the United Nations. The situation is crystal-clear, and the rules are clear in this regard.

Mr. Kryzhanivskyi (Ukraine): As there is no consensus on our proposal, we request, Madam President, that the issue be put to the vote.

The President: I believe that the position is now clear.

Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia): Rule 21, which the representative of Moldova read out very clearly, indicates that at this meeting we should be discussing the report of the General Committee with the intention of approving it. As far as my delegation recalls, we are still considering paragraph 52, which refers to the General Committee's recommendation not to include this item in the agenda. Therefore, my delegation would like to receive some clarification as to exactly what we are voting on and whether there is now approval of the General Committee's recommendation, which is being challenged by certain delegations.

The President: The representative of Ukraine made a proposal to include an agenda item. I am asking

if it is the wish of the Assembly to agree to Ukraine's proposal.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Our question concerns procedure. We fully support the proposal put forward earlier and the position expressed by the delegation of Armenia. We should like to receive clarification, Madam President, as to your intention. In other words, we would like to know exactly what wording you intend to use, particularly because, as we have already stated, the raising of this issue does not comply with the rules regarding the inclusion of an item in the agenda of the General Assembly. We are surprised that, once again, a number of delegations are putting this initiative forward, which completely contradicts Assembly procedure.

Mr. Tulbure (Republic of Moldova): There is a kind of hierarchy here. The General Committee proposes recommendations; I see a clear difference between recommendations and decisions adopted. The Committee's recommendations are either endorsed or rejected by the General Assembly. Therefore, what we, as the Assembly, are entitled to do and requested to do by the rules of procedure is to react to the General Committee's recommendations.

I cannot see any unlawful action here, as the Russian representative claims to see. What we are asked to do and are obliged to do is to take a decision on the draft agenda and the supplementary list, as stated in rule 21 of the rules of procedure, in the light of the report of the General Committee. That is an extremely simple procedure. And, in our opinion, we have to proceed to the vote.

Mr. Alasania (Georgia): I should like to make only a few remarks. First, this is not a new item; it was discussed yesterday in the General Committee, which did not support it. However, we, the fully independent, sovereign States of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova (GUAM), have brought the issue of protracted conflicts in GUAM to the floor for discussion so that it can be put to the vote.

I believe it is truly crystal-clear that a decision should be taken to put this to the vote. What I see instead is pressure from the Russian Federation on the President of the General Assembly. Once again, I ask you and urge you, Madam President, to put this to the vote.

Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia): According to my delegation's understanding of the rules of procedure, we can proceed to the vote on a new proposal only after the recommendation of the General Committee is rejected. As far as my delegation recalls, we have not taken any action to that end. Therefore, my delegation would like to receive clarification: are we going to vote to reject the General Committee's recommendation, or are we going to proceed without such a rejection, which is required before any further action can be taken? Are we going to proceed to the vote on a totally new proposal that is not referred to in the report of the General Committee?

The President: I would ask the representative of Ukraine to phrase his request for a vote. What is the precise wording of Ukraine's request for a vote?

Mr. Kryzhanivskyi (Ukraine): The proposal of the GUAM countries — Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine — is to include in the agenda of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session a supplementary item entitled "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development".

The President: We have heard the phrasing of the request on which the General Assembly is to vote.

We will suspend the meeting briefly.

The meeting was suspended at 6.50 p.m. and resumed at 7.30 p.m.

The President: Following consultations, I propose that the Assembly take a decision on the recommendation contained in paragraph 52 of the report of the General Committee.

I call on the representative of Cyprus on a point of order.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): I would like to say that I am really puzzled with regard to the legal situation of the matter before the Assembly. I therefore believe that we need more clarity before we proceed. Let me explain how I view the situation at the moment.

What we have before us are rules 21, 22 and 23 of the Assembly's rules of procedure. The General Committee took a decision not to recommend the inclusion of the agenda item in question. What, therefore, is the recommendation we are going to vote on? There is no recommendation.

What does rule 21 of the rules of procedure say? It says that we have a provisional agenda and a supplementary list. This item is neither on the provisional agenda nor on the supplementary list, so for me rule 21 is completely irrelevant in this case.

Rule 22 refers to items that are already on the agenda and to amendments and deletions of those agenda items, so rule 22 is, again, completely irrelevant in this case.

Rule 23 refers to a debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda when that item has been recommended by the General Committee. It also refers to limitations in the number of speakers in that debate. In this case, we do not have an item that has been recommended for inclusion, so the legal situation is not clear to me. Maybe, by contrast, we can presume that there might be cases in which we can have a debate and a decision when an item has not been recommended. I cannot exclude that possibility, but it is not stated in the rules of procedure, so I believe that it is absolutely necessary at this stage to have an informed opinion. We need clarity.

My suggestion would be to ask the Office of Legal Affairs to provide us with some clarity and guidance on how to deal with this issue. We cannot proceed without clarity on this because we do not have a recommendation. Therefore, my suggestion is that the meeting be suspended until tomorrow or Friday — it is up to the President to decide — to give the Office of Legal Affairs time to provide some clarity on this situation.

The President: I would just like to clarify that there is a recommendation not to include this item.

We are now going to vote on this issue, that we do not include the agenda item entitled "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development".

Those in favour of the content of paragraph 52 of the General Committee's report, recommending that the item not be included in the agenda, please vote yes. Those who are against the content of paragraph 52 of the report and wish that that item be included, vote no.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Cyprus, Eritrea, Greece, Guinea, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Estonia, Guatemala, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Yemen

The recommendation contained in paragraph 52 of the report of the General Committee was rejected by 16 votes to 15, with 65 abstentions.

The President: I call on the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Alasania (Georgia): I just want to clarify one thing. Does the rejection of paragraph 52 of the report of the General Committee mean that item 42 of the provisional agenda will be included in the agenda of the sixty-first session?

The President: Yes.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before we go on to other items, we should like to explain, in light of the remarks made by the representative of Georgia, that a vote has just been taken on whether or not the General Assembly wished

to retain paragraph 52 of the report of the General Committee. We did not vote in favour of including a new item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. We have yet to vote on that issue. Why does the rejection of paragraph 52 of the report automatically mean the inclusion of a new item in the agenda? From a procedural standpoint, the rejection of a recommendation by the General Committee does not automatically signify a decision to include the item. There are one ore more alternatives. For example, the item might be included in the agenda at a future session of the General Assembly, following consideration by the General Committee, which would, of course, take account of the General Assembly decision adopted today.

In addition, we wish to draw attention to a series of procedural violations that occurred in the voting procedure, because a number of delegations pressed their buttons before the voting was declared open. Their action had a decisive impact on the final outcome, in particular influencing delegations without precise instructions, which — it is no secret —tend to vote with the majority. We would therefore like to receive clarification as to exactly what we voted on and to propose that the vote be repeated.

To sum up, we are dealing with procedural violations and lack of clarity with regard to the question we are voting on. Our proposal therefore is that the vote be repeated.

The President: I shall now call on representatives who wish to explain their vote.

Mr. Anshor (Indonesia): Yesterday, the General Committee considered the proposal to include item 42 — entitled "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development" — in the draft agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Had the proposal been put to a vote in the General Committee yesterday, Indonesia, as a member of the Committee, would have abstained from the voting, for it would not wish to take sides with any party to the dispute. However, the Committee managed to adopt without a vote a decision not to recommend the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

As a member of the Committee, Indonesia is part of the decision-making in the Committee and is obliged to respect the decision it has taken. That is the reason my delegation voted in favour of paragraph 52 of the report.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for presiding over this rather tricky procedural meeting. We are very grateful for your guidance.

Our position is very simple, so I will say what it is, in the hope that it is helpful to others. Our view is that the vote has now been completed. We understood clearly that we were voting in one go on both rejection of paragraph 52 of the report of the General Committee and, thereby, on inclusion of the new GUAM agenda item.

I would like to make two more points, if I may. The first is that the report of the General Committee is subject to the approval of the General Assembly. It is not just the other items that are subject to the General Assembly's approval, the report itself is. I would also like to say that, should there be any doubt about this — and we do not believe that there is — it is important that the General Assembly should be able to debate any issue that its members feel falls within the scope of the Charter. That is an important principle, and it should guide us today.

The President: I shall now continue with the report.

In paragraph 53, in connection with item 114 of the draft agenda, entitled "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission", the General Committee recommends that item 114 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading A, entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 54, in connection with item 149 of the draft agenda, entitled "Report of the Human Rights Council", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session under heading D, entitled "Promotion of human rights". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In connection with paragraphs 55, 57 and 62, relating to items 151, 153 and 158 of the draft agenda, the General Committee recommends the inclusion of item 158, entitled "Requests for observer

status in the General Assembly" in the agenda of the current session under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters" and decided to recommend that the requests for observer status of intergovernmental organizations in the General Assembly will be considered under item 158 of the draft agenda. Consequently, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 151 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the OPEC Fund for International Development in the General Assembly" and item 153 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the Collaborative Intergovernmental Scientific Research Institute in the General Assembly".

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation of the General Committee to include item 158 in the agenda of the current session under heading I?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 56, in connection with item 152 of the draft agenda, "The rule of law at the national and international levels", the General Committee recommends that that item be included in the agenda of the current session under heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 58, in connection with item 154 of the draft agenda, "International Year of Reconciliation, 2009", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: With respect to paragraph 59, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 155 of the draft agenda.

In paragraph 60, in connection with item 156 of the draft agenda, "Financing of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste", the General Committee recommends that item 156 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 61, in connection with item 157 of the draft agenda, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 63, in connection with the item entitled "Follow-up to the recommendations on administrative management and internal oversight of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the agenda that the General Committee recommends in paragraph 64 of its report for adoption by the General Assembly, taking into account the decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agenda. Bearing in mind that the agenda is now organized under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion of items under each heading as a whole. I should like to remind members once again that at present we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 to 3 have already been dealt with.

We turn to items 4 to 8. May I take it that those items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, "Maintenance of international peace and security".

May I take it that the items listed under heading A are included in the agenda, taking into account the decision taken on item 42 of the draft agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to heading B, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences".

May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to heading C, "Development of Africa".

May I take it that the item listed under that heading is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we come to heading D, "Promotion of human rights".

May I take it that the items listed under heading D are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading E is entitled "Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts".

May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law".

May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we turn to heading G, "Disarmament".

May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading H is entitled "Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations".

May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we turn to heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section V of the report of the General Committee, on allocation of items.

The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 65 to 68. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to also take note of the information contained in paragraph 67 concerning the granting of observer status?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 69 to 76. We shall take up the recommendations one by one.

Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 64 of the report before us, namely, document A/61/250.

We turn first to paragraphs 69 (a) to (j), relating to a number of plenary items. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the item that was adopted earlier, "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development". The sponsors of the item have proposed that it be considered directly in plenary meeting. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraph 70, relating to item 89, "General and complete

disarmament". May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to paragraph 71, relating to item 32, "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects". May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraph 73, relating to item 60, "Advancement of women". May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 74 (a) to (c), relating to items 117, 127 and 150 of the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves these recommendations?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 75 (a) and (b), on items 79 and 152 of the Sixth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves these recommendations?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraph 76, relating to item 67, "Report of the Human Rights Council". The General Committee decided to defer its recommendation on the allocation of this item.

We shall now turn to paragraph 77 of the report of the General Committee.

I now invite members to turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items listed in paragraph 77?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for the Sixth Committee. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation.

Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

Holy See participation in the work of the General Assembly

The President: I would now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See, in its capacity as an Observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/314 of 1 July 2004, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an Observer State, will participate in the work of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

Palestine participation in the work of the General Assembly

The President: I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of Palestine, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 43/177 of 15 December 1988 and 52/250 of 7 July 1998, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, Palestine, in its capacity as observer, will participate in the work of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

The meeting rose at 8.10 p.m.